

November 15, 2022

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN
AND HILDA L. SOLIS**

**Advancing Countywide Efforts to Address Environmental Hazards - Establishing the
Office of Environmental Justice and Climate Health**

The County of Los Angeles continues to face serious challenges to lowering the burden of environmental pollution and climate change on our residents, especially in communities already disproportionately impacted by existing health conditions, poor healthcare access and economic disparities. To develop a more strategic and proactive approach to environmental problems that communities have been experiencing for decades, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a motion on April 5, 2022. This motion built upon previous Board-led environmental initiatives and established Environmental Justice and Climate Health as Board Priorities. The Board also directed the Department of Public Health (“Public Health”), in consultation with the Chief Executive Office, Fire Health HazMat Division, Department of Public Works, and the Chief Sustainability Office to propose a strategic planning process to operationalize the new Environmental Justice and Climate Health Board-Directed Priority, including a roadmap and analysis of how to create an Office of Environmental Justice and Climate Health and how it would coordinate with related County initiatives; a comprehensive set of policy areas of focus; identification of data needs; and identification of needed resources and staffing support.

In response to the April 5, 2022 motion, Public Health developed a framework and plan to

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establish the Office of Environmental Justice and Climate Health (Office), involving a nine-month strategic planning process that will be led by a consultant with expertise in in community engagement as well as the environmental justice and climate health landscape in the County of Los Angeles. The Office will serve as a central hub for health-focused environmental justice and climate health goals, and a repository for health, environmental, and policy data. To realize a community-first approach, community engagement will be a cornerstone function of the Office. Other interrelated functions will include interagency coordination, a robust policy agenda, new data platforms, and communications to a variety of audiences. The Office will function as a multi-disciplinary taskforce that centralizes countywide environmental justice efforts, empowers community members and provides comprehensive data, health recommendations, policy solutions, and mitigation strategies to address historic and contemporary government decisions that place sensitive populations in proximity to environmental hazards.

Over the last 8 years, the Board has provided Public Health with policy direction and additional staff to address the growing number of environmental incidents and layer in more prevention work - in 2014, the Board provided three staff, and in 2016, the Board added 17 staff to Public Health. In recent years, COVID-19 response activities and hiring challenges have made it difficult to fully staff environmental justice-related priorities. This motion and the previous April 5, 2022 motion call for a refocus and reinvigoration of countywide environmental justice efforts. To operationalize this, Public Health has identified one-time bridge funding to develop a Strategic Plan. As the next step to advance the County's commitment and action to protect communities

from environmental harms and climate change, the Board of Supervisors should proceed with establishing and operationalizing the Office of Environmental Justice and Climate Health.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

- 1) Instruct the Director of Public Health to adopt the roadmap in the October 17, 2022 report and create the Office of Environmental Justice and Climate Health; to work in collaboration with relevant County departments, including, but not limited to, the Chief Sustainability Office, Fire Health HazMat Division, Department of Regional Planning, Department of Public Works, community partners and coordinating agencies; and to complete the following:
 - a. A Strategic Plan that finalizes the priority policy areas of focus, in consultation with community stakeholders and the Community Prevention and Population Health Task Force,
 - b. Within 30 days, appoint an Interim Director, utilizing an existing position, to oversee the Strategic Planning process.
- 2) Direct the Director of DPH, in collaboration with Chief Executive Office's Budget and Classification & Compensation staff, to submit a budget request that includes long-term staffing and funding recommendations for any additional resources that the Office may need beyond the existing staff, including a recommendation for the appropriate allocation for the permanent and interim director role.
- 3) Direct the Director of DPH, with input from CEO, to provide quarterly progress reports until

the Strategic Plan is published, on the implementation of the aforementioned, including Strategic Plan status updates and vacancy rates for existing positions.

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JH:kb